

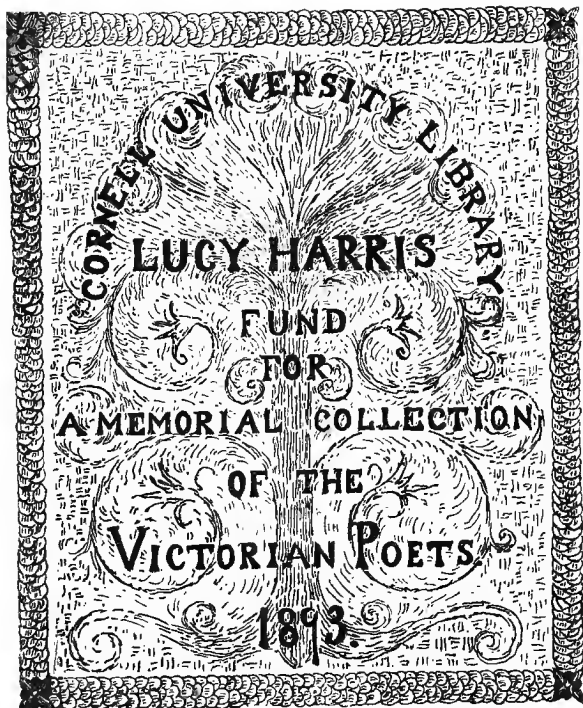
PAST AND PRESENT

HAMILTON AID

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## PAST AND PRESENT



# PAST AND PRESENT

VERSES

BY

HAMILTON AÏDÉ  
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LONDON:

GEORGE BELL AND SONS

1903

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THREE of the poems in this volume have appeared in the "Anglo-Saxon Review," the "Pall Mall Magazine," and "The Thrush." One was published in the third edition of "Songs without Music"; but has been much altered since then. The rest are now given to the public for the first time.



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# PAST AND PRESENT.

## VENUS AND MARS.

ONE night, on my balcony leaning  
I read in the burning stars,  
How, with Heaven between us, they loved in Venus,  
How they were fighting in Mars.

I saw in that lawless kingdom,  
Where the shrine of the Goddess stands,  
Laden with gold, and silver told,  
In a Temple made with hands,

How the flames on each altar flicker,  
As its votaries dance and pray  
To the Goddess of wiles, who sometimes smiles,  
And sometimes turns away.

They offer up Health and Honour,  
They serve till they faint, and fall  
At that despot's shrine, who, instead of wine,  
Drinketh the strength of all.

All, whether young, or aged,—  
All, in that planet above,  
Who fall before, and blindly adore  
The Goddess they miscall "Love."

For the soul that ennobles Woman  
They know not, who kneel in the dust,  
And raise a throne, for a Goddess of stone,  
To rule o'er her Court of Lust.

When the rose on the flesh is faded,  
When the midnight hair turns gray,  
What do they know of the spirit's glow  
That illumines the lamp of clay?

And when the lamp is broken,  
And out its flame is blown,  
Can they dream of a light still burning bright,  
Who worship the lamp alone?

Can they hope for a life's devotion  
That never changes, nor dies,  
Who stand and wait at Venus' gate,  
For a glance for her changing eyes?

"Ah! happy on earth," I murmured,  
"Are we in enlightened days,  
For a golden ring to woman we bring,  
And a worthier song of praise.

“With the type of the Blessed Mary  
For ever before our eyes,  
Are we not more pure, and of Heaven more sure,  
Than these Pagans in the skies?”

Then, lo! like a poisoned arrow,  
Shot through the tangled mesh  
Of my boast, the shame that on earth the name  
Was but changed, for this worship of flesh.

“Venus still rules one half the world,”  
I said with a sigh: and turned  
To where on high, in the windless sky,  
The God of battles burned.

On the edge of a blood-stained river  
His brazen temple stood:  
And his cohorts passed, from first to last,  
Their spear-heads stained with blood.

Blood flowed from the marble altar,  
Blood streamed through the sunset sky:  
And a crash of blows, as of thunder, rose,  
And a wind, like a human sigh.

The curse of the fettered nations,  
Away into slavery led,  
I heard on the ships, from the captives' lips,  
I saw on the face of the dead.

And I muttered "How much longer  
Shall this tyrant's kingdom last?  
Till his sword, in token, be sheathed, or broken?  
His oppression be overpast?

"Alas! for those poor pagans,  
In the great planet there,  
Who have never heard the glad news that stirred  
For the Shepherds, the star-lit air!

"When they their flocks were tending,  
The words that should move the world,  
Proclaiming Peace that should never cease,  
Like a banner were first unfurled. . . ."

*Peace?* . . . Once again I shrank abashed.  
Since first to man was brought  
The news that morn that the Christ was born,  
What had the message wrought?

'Twas nineteen hundred years ago  
That the shepherds were thus hailed:  
And are we all then so much better men,  
Since the Gods of old prevailed?

Is greed of conquest a tale that is told?  
On the hills is the shepherd's pipe  
Ne'er hushed by the tramp of invader's camp,  
When the harvest-fields are ripe?



In the struggle 'twixt wealth and poverty here,  
Where dwells "Goodwill"? Redress  
Is sought with the knife, at the cost of life,—  
"Peace" is to dispossess!

And though nor slave nor empress more  
A Roman triumph swells,  
And Christians cry to God on high  
No more in Roman cells,

Does love reign universal here,  
When we, at Christmas time,  
Sing out, like birds, the Angels' words  
In the tongues of every clime?

. . . I wonder, as I look upward now,  
At those passionate courts in heaven,  
If—by changing stars—had been sent to Mars  
The message which we were given,

And, in Venus, those benighted souls  
Pure love had learnt to know,  
Whether they on high, in the midnight sky,  
Might be better than we below!

## MYSTERY.

WHY was he given so vile a mother?

Why was that soul, from the stainless blue,  
Not sent to the hungry arms of another—

A woman whose record was pure and true?

Why on a heart that her conscience upbraided,

Was the holy pearl of maternity pressed?

Why the bowed head, by bought kisses degraded,

Thus with the halo of motherhood blessed?

The Spirit passed by, as from God it descended,

The homes of many a childless wife,

Till there, in the stronghold of evil, it ended

Its journey, to enter a human life.

O mystery of man's incarnation !

Where do we come from? how? and why?

Souls of devils in lofty station,

Souls of saints in the human sty!

None but He, on His anvil sending

Sparks from the forge of this human star,

Sees, through the dark, where each is tending,

And counts its hazards, for peace or war.

## BEYOND THESE VOICES.

IF to pass hence be not to die completely,  
If something of us shall survive beyond,  
Must the pure joys of breath that pass so fleetly  
Be lost for aye, like ripples in a pond?

Must we then lose the bond of tears and laughter?  
Will the long sunshine never ask for rain?  
I hope my spirit will not thirst hereafter  
For wells of human sympathy in vain.

Will the perfected knowledge then prevent us  
From learning, as before our race was run?  
Shall the small rays of light that here were lent us  
Be lost in the effulgence of the sun?

Shall we be set so far above all sorrow  
As not to feel the minor chords of song?  
Will the enamelled fields of glory borrow  
No shadow that to passing clouds belong?

It cannot be. The things we here deem mortal  
Have in them often more of Heaven than clay:  
Those links will not be snapped, when through its portal  
The soul is swept from this dear world away.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE.<sup>1</sup>

ONE moonlight night, 'twas New Year's Eve,  
My Jean and I stole out to find us  
In the churchyard, where we must leave  
One day our flesh and bones behind us.  
Through the lych-gate we passed with fear,  
To learn who might be dead next year.

We thought the cripple child of four,  
Weary of life's short day, would enter;  
The suffering woman of fourscore,  
Waiting until release was sent her;  
The man, whose boist'rous life by drink  
Must soon be shortened, one would think!

The sick, the hungry, and the wronged,  
At their own hands, or that of others,  
All who through many a night had longed  
To lie at peace beside their mothers:  
We looked to see those souls appear,  
And find their resting places here.

<sup>1</sup> There is a superstition in certain parts of Devon that when the New Year is born, the spirits of those who will die in the course of the ensuing twelve months visit the churchyard where they will lie.

We dreamed not of the strong and pure,  
The happy young who hope to marry,  
Nor of the Squire, protected sure  
From sickness by the apothecary;  
Nor of the Bishop in his coach,  
Mitred secure from sin's encroach.

The snow lay in the churchyard cup.  
Under the frozen porch we stood,  
And watched the impartial moon light up  
White headstones of the bad and good.  
Then as the clock struck twelve, we wist  
The lych-gate opened in the mist.

And through it passed a lad and lass,  
Two shadows in the moonlight blue,  
And we beheld, as in a glass,  
The bloodless faces of the two.  
The lass's was the face of Jean;  
The laddie's was my own, I ween.

Before the year, now new, shall die,  
And roses yet unblown shall fade,  
Beside the old folk we shall lie,  
In beds made ready with the spade.  
We've lived: we've loved. 'Tis best to know  
How brief the time ere we must go.

1901.

## NOT PROVEN.

COME to the woods, Man. The sun has risen  
Here in the streets. The listening stones  
Seem to sweat blood: they crush my bones,  
And stifle my breath as they did in prison!

“Not proven,” they said, and set me free.  
But the river saw that deed in the boat,  
And the hangman’s rope is round my throat,—  
Still round my throat—and will always be!

I’d rather have swung at once, than travel  
Through sleepless nights: those drowning eyes  
Fixt upon mine with wild surprise,  
As I held him down, in the weeds and gravel!

I held him down till the eyes grew dim,  
And I dashed a stone on the blue-veined brow.  
Why did I do it? I know not now. . . .  
God! I wish I were under the mould with him!

I righted the boat, and the stream was red,  
As it oozed along through the tangled weeds:  
And I know that the wound in his head still bleeds,  
As it did that night when I left him dead.

The Parson may preach of forgiveness. . . . Well!  
I only ask to forget,—to close  
My eyes, Man . . . Oh, when a bad chap goes,  
The fire's most spent,—for *this is Hell*.

1899.

## LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

WHY should the nobler part of us  
Suffer on earth decay?  
The spirit, the hope, the heart of us  
Are not as the perishing clay.  
When the back is bent, and the cruse is spent,  
These should strengthen day by day.

Omar Kayyam may sing to us  
His paeon of lust and wine:  
Can such philosophy bring to us  
Courage, as years decline?  
Courage to face the unknown space,  
Beyond the horizon's line?

How, when the darkness falls on us,  
If a hand put out the light,  
And the soul in its anguish calls on us,  
"Watchman, what of the night?"  
When to that cry there is no reply,  
Is he wise who hath lost his sight?



It is but a gleam, for the best of us,  
From the Lighthouse, Faith, no more:  
And a broken ray for the rest of us,  
Through the chinks of its half-shut door:  
For you, for me, across that sea,  
It burns from the unknown shore.

The wisdom of Man should reveal to us  
How little on earth we know;  
Though marvels of Science appeal to us,  
Who can the First Cause show?  
Who points to the Hand that scattered the sand,  
Which the winds of eternity blow?

1899.

## CONCERNING A CERTAIN COUPLE.

LOVE bloomed in early summer for those two;  
But in the drought died every opening rose.  
Then, with late autumn-rains, once more it blew,  
For the best flower a second birthday knows.

## TO MY SOUL.

My Soul, when shall we be together,  
I and that better part of me,  
That has already passed the straits  
Of Death, and on the shore awaits,  
The other side of Time, for me?

“Where all things are forgotten?” Never!  
Naught is forgotten, but our wrongs.  
The great Forgiveness spreads his hand  
O’er all, in that beloved land,—  
The land to which our best belongs.

And those shall meet that here were severed  
By human laws, or God’s decree.  
Our bodies, stung with passion’s pain,  
Shall all be purified from stain  
Hereafter, when our souls are free.

They are not meant to die completely.  
Believe it not. We feel too much,  
And know too little, for it all  
To end in dust, beneath the pall,  
Where the heart throbs not at a touch.

This is the prelude, O my Soul!  
The symphony is not played here.  
Take thy part bravely while on earth:  
Hereafter, whatsoe'er 'tis worth,  
Thy music shall be made more clear.

1890.

## ON SEEING A FILE OF SCHOOLBOYS IN THE STREETS OF ROME.

HERE, two by two, with solemn paces,  
Chimney-pots, long cloaks, and wraps,  
I see them pass, their sallow faces  
Inanimate—poor little chaps!  
Cricket and football know they not:  
Trained on no large and healthy plan,  
They sprout, they vegetate, they rot,—  
The child is father to the man.

Priest-ridden, in a narrow field,  
How shall such cramped existence yield  
The crop of manhood that of old  
Were leaders in the state and field?  
Where are thy sculptors, painters, bards,  
Who made thy fame, O Italy?  
These boys, at dominoes or cards  
Will play in cafés till they die.

Is genius dead with violent days?  
It flourished in the stress of storm.  
What is the poison that decays  
Imagination, colour, form?

None disobey great Nature's laws  
But they must suffer. From thy brow  
The crown is rent. I see the cause  
Of thy departed glory now.

1899.

WRITTEN IN A DROUGHT, CONCERNING  
A CERTAIN GARDEN.

Go, little Cloud, and gather with thy friends,  
Over the house where one dwelt long ago,  
Who loved her flowers, and haply from on high  
Now watches the dry earth drink up their blood,  
And mourns for them. But tarry not too long:  
After each thirsty stem a thankful face  
Uplifts, disperse. Though she has passed away,  
And other feet now linger on the lawn,  
At summer-evening-ends, and other hands  
Clip the dead rose, and prop the drooping pink,  
Gloom must ne'er haunt the garden where she dwelt,  
For, from that other garden where she now  
Walks, and no blossom fades, she still may see  
These children of her care, that never proved,  
As some friends do, ungrateful. . . . Who can tell  
How much of thought for this green earth still lives  
In that Beyond? Go, therefore, little Cloud,  
Let fall some drops upon that parchèd ground,  
Lest she who loved it grieve in Paradise.

1901.

## CALLOUSNESS.

THE people sauntered round the square:  
I heard them argue, heard them swear:  
While she, nineteen years old, was tried,  
And sentenced, for infanticide.

They all had known the girl. Was there  
No heart that throbbed with her despair?  
Perhaps: but dull lives love to meet,  
Face to face, horror in the street.

Better than "penny dreadfuls," . . . they,  
Passing the girl, had watched each day  
In that worn cheek the colour rise,  
And read her secret in her eyes.

And now, her doom being known, they gaped;  
Some shook their heads, "The wench was raped,  
Maybe?" Some groaned, "Good looks a curse is!"  
. . . Dulness blunts every edge—e'en Mercy's.



Ditches that creep to the dark sea,  
Sluggish, from all emotion free . . . !  
Will bread return we cast from shore  
On those slow waters? Nevermore.

But oh, the whirlpool that sucks down  
Poor souls like this, from king to clown !  
We, on the brink, dare not condemn,—  
So little stands 'twixt us and them!

Poor stricken Soul! I thought that night,  
I'd rather be put out of sight,  
With you, than have the callous stare  
Of most who sauntered round that square!

1901.

## ITALY IN WINTER.

WRITTEN IN THE RAILWAY TRAIN, NEW YEAR'S  
DAY, 1902.

CAN this be Italy, which I chiefly know  
In rose and grape time—this wide world of snow?  
Heaven has every colour, Earth has few,  
Save the far hills, of deep abiding blue,  
And the refracted glories of the sky,  
On frozen streams, what time the sun rides high,  
But never melts the white reluctant ground;  
Like some hot lover, with his arms around  
A maid, whose hidden heart he cannot reach. . . .  
I see the slender uprights of the peach,  
And almond, etched upon the earth's white paper,  
With fingers lifted, delicate and taper,  
To the clear sky. There, too, I see uprise  
The blackened fumes of monied enterprise,  
And pale wood-smoke that mounts a curlèd stair,  
From some poor home, to Heaven's purer air.  
We touch great cities, but shoot past the town  
Erst held in terror, and of high renown,  
Now crumbling into ruin, save one tower:  
(Few travellers halt here, even for an hour).  
How clear the air! That tower we behold  
Set, like an amethyst, against the gold,

That turns to citron, darkening by degrees,  
Behind the sharp-cut spires of cyprus trees;  
Till the great Chief, triumphant in his fall,  
Hangs flaming banners on the twilight's wall.  
Then quickly follows night, that hides away  
All things, save the white carpet, turned to gray.

\* \* \* \* \*

Snow, with the night, was gone. The morning broke  
At Bari, on the sea, when I awoke. . . .  
My heart leapt up. I could have kissed the mouth  
E'en of the prickly pears! Beloved South!  
Thy tawdry churches, and thy sombre trees  
(Gray-hooded olives, gnarled about the knees,  
Like aged monks distort by genuflexions),  
Red-painted walls, and rococo erections, . . .  
I love them all! Beneath this generous sun  
I breathe again, as if I'd just begun  
To live, since Autumn strewed the earth with leaves.  
. . . It is the southern sun in me that grieves,  
And scoffs, and cries with irony, in vain,  
"You choke in fogs, you loathe the useful rain,  
Here your blood quickens and your flesh revives.  
. . . *You English?*" . . . Yes. Had I a hundred lives,  
They should be England's: for I love her best.  
She has my soul—the South has all the rest!

## FALLEN GREATNESS.

SAFE. In the last security of years,  
A Lady sits, who, like a flame at night,  
Once, sudden, shot up to a dizzy height,  
And now, having lost all, has outlived tears.

Kings bowed before her: here alone she stands,  
Courtiered by woods and fields, that cannot know  
Inconstancy, nor in revolt o'erthrow  
A dynasty, created by their hands.

Nothing here changes but the seasons now:  
No wrath, no stir of war, but in the sky.  
Where the rose blossoms, there the rose will die,  
The lily faints, a crown still on her brow.

So here the Lady reigns, secure from wrong,  
And bravely waits the end. She hath withstood  
Infinite anguish and ingratitude:  
And still her heart, in its great Faith, is strong.

## MY DREAM.

I DREAMT that I and a great company,  
Each with his fardel, stood at Heaven's gate.  
Then spake an Angel, through the golden bars,  
"None enters here, who casts not down his weight—

"His weight of leaden protest, or remorse,  
Of doubts that crush, or terrors that appall,  
Ye left God's presence fearless: have ye lost  
In this long journeying the best of all?

"Go, give to earth the load that came from earth:  
Strengthen the back: stand upright without fear.  
He sent you forth. He waits for your return.  
Those who have bled are doubly welcome here."

Then I awoke. One star shone out of Heaven:  
And my soul asked, "Are all things what they  
seemed?"  
Though 'neath its fardel still my back was bowed,  
I had drunk courage from the thing I dreamed.

1902.

## SHOUT!

SHOUT, for the ship that 's in sight!

Weep for the ship that 's away!

Grieve for the fallen in fight,

But honour the victor with bay.

Hope never dies with the light, for the night

Hides within it the promise of day.

Shout for the Youth that has won!

Weep for the Youth that has failed!

At noontide the day is not done,

For the mists that at morning prevailed.

Why should the race that 's begun not be won,

Though the boat was nigh wrecked when it sailed?

Shout, for the glory of birth!

Weep for the conquest of death!

With the love and the laughter of mirth

Come the sin and the sorrows of breath:

But the man who despairs on this earth is not worth

We should weep for him after his death.

## AN APOLOGUE.

IN a dark alley, close and high,  
Whose roofs almost shut out the sky,  
Beside a gutter which the rain  
Had purified, and filled again,  
Two little cherubs, clothed in rags,  
Were playing on the still-wet flags,  
And, looking downwards, in the stream  
Beheld what unto each did seem  
The best thing there: one her own face,  
The other Heaven's. A little space  
Transfixed, Narcissus-like, no less  
In love with her own loveliness,  
The first cried, "See! How pretty! See!  
I'm glad that pretty face is me!  
Like those wax dolls wi' locks of gold  
And big blue eyes, the babies hold  
In kerridges a-riding by!" . . .

The other only saw the sky,  
'Twixt the dark chimneys,—only knew  
The Heaven above was pure and blue.

Image of after-life! Each soul  
Finds what it looks for, far or nigh:  
Self-centred, one here sees his goal,  
One, in the great Beyond on high.

## ENOUGH.

How many banners in the world  
Remain unto the end unfurled!  
How many coils continue curled  
    Around the homes of you and me!  
Who dreams of enterprises lost?  
Who knows what blood each conquest cost?  
And, with the galleons tempest-tost,  
    All we threw overboard at sea?

We've lived, My Lady, many a year  
In close companionship, more near  
Than most souls to each other here:  
    And yet how little do we see  
Of that which lies the other side  
Of silence, upon which we glide  
As over glassy seas, that hide  
    Secrets unguessed by you, by me!

And 'tis well so. The outer court  
Of that dark labyrinth of thought  
Has light enough: for time is short  
In which to read the things we see.  
Since good and ill the Gods bestow,  
There is no choice. But what we show  
To one another,—that we know,  
    It is enough for you and me.



## LONG AFTERWARDS.

WE met in the autumn's ruin,  
And we two stood alone:  
The garden the asters grew in  
With wet red leaves was strewn.

We gazed in each other's faces—  
Was all that was passed a dream?  
Our hearts looked down long spaces  
Of shade to one far-off gleam.

One gleam on the dim horizon,  
Fading—fading from view :  
For we set our tearless eyes on  
The Light of lost hopes, we knew.

Then both of us vowed, or ever  
We parted, whate'er might be,  
That the hearts of two children should never  
Be broken by him or me.

## FAILURE.

How few whose brains in youth were vaunted  
Have reached their young ambition's prize!  
They fell: or lay, their courage daunted,  
With heights to climb before their eyes.

And some have sinned, and some are sainted,  
Whom, as a boy, I thought to see  
Throned in the glory Fancy painted,  
With all the gifts the Gods decree.

He blames him not, tho' fallen, who knows him  
To have been born without the grit  
To fight the forces that oppose him,  
And grasp the crown, retaining it.

How often envious Fate hath set him  
Just where his gifts can least avail,  
And those who watched his rise forget him,  
When they have seen their hero fail.

God's judgement clothes shall ne'er determine:  
The parson's black, the soldier's red,  
The threadbare vest, the cape of ermine,—  
'Tis all the same when we are dead.

The same our failure, or our glory,  
If Conscience saith our best was done,  
Whether the name was known in story,  
Or buried in oblivion.

## LUXOR.

THE Kings are quiet in this place,  
With hands upon their knees:  
And yet they were a fighting race,  
Thotmes and Rameses.

With hands upon their knees they sit,  
But clenched, with open eyes:  
Waiting, like vigilant night starlit,  
The clarion Dawn to rise.

Ready to seize the spear, and slay  
The foeman on the wall,  
To conquer peoples far away,  
And bring them back in thrall.

Ready to build, or devastate ;  
Their laws of right and wrong  
Were not as ours; strong to create,  
As for destruction strong.

They made them Gods of kings deceased,  
And built them temples new,  
And gave the head of bird or beast  
To Powers they blindly knew.

The Power that raised, the Power that ruled,  
The Power that made men fight:  
They sought Him, though debasely schooled,  
But found Him not aright.

They called Him Ptah, who formed our earth,  
And Ra, who woke the sun:  
Osiris, who shall judge, from birth  
To death, the deeds here done.

Sometimes, above the rest were set  
It might be One, or Three:  
Foreshadowing, where the forces met,  
The mighty Faith to be.

Yet their idolatry and laws  
Were part of that vast plan  
That should uplift to one great Cause  
The hopes and prayers of Man.

They worshipped Light and Truth: but graves  
Were spots on the sun's disk:  
What were a thousand slaughtered slaves  
Against an obelisk?

They held it cheap, this human life:  
And graven stones are sure.  
The records of victorious strife,  
When men are dead, endure.

They wrought their work for weal or woe,  
One end in view alone,  
To live, when they embalmed must go  
And lie in beds of stone.

Long lines of emperors and kings  
Have had, since then, their day:  
And few have left their mark of things;  
They reigned, and passed away.

These left it. They accomplished well  
Their work, that men might read  
In stone the lasting chronicle  
Of every mighty deed.

According to their lights they wrought,  
Who knew not Christ. Yet when  
He came, *who* fired the stakes, and sought  
To slay their fellow men?

Better the crimes of mighty Seth,  
In the old Egyptian days,  
Than those of priests, who did to death  
Heretics, in God's praise!

1902.

LINES WRITTEN NEAR THE BARRAGE,  
UPPER NILE.

Now, in high banks of gray-gold sand,  
The Nile flows, shrunk to one thin line,  
Like faded turquoise in a band  
Of golden armlet serpentine.

Priceless, beyond discoloured stones,  
Each drop the shadoof brings allays  
The fever in the dry earth's bones,  
The thirst of millet and of maize.

The river's banks, two months ago,  
Were those far fields of sugar-cane:  
Now, till the waters rise and flow,  
The baked earth will cry out in vain.

The age is past when captive bands  
Built walls to tell a conqueror's deeds.  
We hold up Nature's mighty hands  
To bless Man in his earthly needs.

The wall we build, without a word  
Tells its own story here for ever.  
It needs no sculptures to record  
The conquest that enslaves a river.

## A HUSBAND'S MESSAGE.

IF you should go to Heaven before I die,  
I lay on your young soul, my little maid,  
The charge to seek my lady there on high,  
And tell her that, though I have often strayed  
From the high upland, where she stood, and called  
In the clear air, and I, obeying, placed  
Her image on the shrine, it stands there still,  
Where none can see it, curtained, closely walled,  
Its colours fresh, so kept from outward ill,  
All other painted images effaced:  
And the world says, "He has forgotten," . . . Well,  
Only the stars, that watch my bed, can tell  
How often I have passionately cried,  
In the still watches of the night, and bade  
Her whose strong hand once held my retrograde  
Feet from the chasm, to come back, and chide  
Faith that is shaken in the life beyond.



Yes, seek her out, my little maid, and say  
I do not kneel to canonized Saints. Most men  
Have known *one*, who, over the troubled pond,  
Touched the tired swimmer, passing, with her wings;  
And so it was with me. To her I pray,  
Heart of my heart! my purifying fire!  
Whose flame burned steadfast through my wanderings,  
No will-o'-the-wisp, until she died. Since then,  
The world to me is as a sleepless night.  
Here there is nothing more that I desire:  
Though sometimes glimmers a faint hope afar. . . .  
But oftener seems to me a falling star!

1902.

## FROM HIM TO HER.

I LIVE again the hour when first we met, and bless it:

I hear the voice which wakened every sense that  
slept since youth:

I take your hand once more between my hands, and  
press it

Against my heart in dreams, which are vivid as the  
truth.

I look into your eyes, and the breath of daybreak  
follows,

I look into your heart, and I see the morning sun:  
It lights up all high places, and only scorns the  
hollows,

Where the thieving foxes lurk, and the spiders' webs  
are spun.

What did you find, Belovèd, to lift me, without reason,  
Up from the crowd of lovers, by whom you were be-  
set?

All younger, nobler, stronger; yet I think, for one  
short season,

You were happy, my Belovèd, and you never will  
forget.

You never will forget: but with home and children  
    round you,  
And the turf that grows so quickly o'er the grave  
    of buried things,  
I would not that the ghost of the day when first I  
    found you  
Should trouble your contentment, with the bitter-  
    ness that stings.

## THE HUMAN BARK.

THRUST out on the dark waters, like a boat  
That has no choice to go or stay behind,  
We, for a little space, are left to float,  
The sport of waves, that traffic with the wind.  
And they may swamp us: for Man's boat, we know,  
Is of frail timber, never meant to brave  
The rough sea long: and all are dragged below,  
Down to the tangled weeds we call a grave.

There may be other waters, where the spars  
Meet and reform: with some this is Belief;  
With some Hope only. But beyond the stars,  
Beyond the moon-led tides of human grief,  
Most of us have a cognisance of some  
Spirit that orders all, the light, the dark;  
When to His presence, one by one, we come,  
He will deal justly with each human bark.

## WONDER.

THE happy wonder, when life is young,  
At the beautiful world that sings about us,  
Lasts but a day. When the songs are sung,  
We learn that the world can do without us.

But the sorrowful wonder, when life is old,  
At all the wrongs that are left unrighted,  
Lives till we die. Then the end is told  
Of tales, hidden here from the longest-sighted.

## A COLLECTOR.

THE last of all the lads I knew  
At school has closed his Book: a sage  
Esteemed. But had he learned the true  
Wisdom that lies in every page?

Around him, stored within his courts  
(Like wonders viewed through windows dim),  
Were rarest manuscripts, the thoughts  
Of great men, that spoke not to him.

From all works beautiful he sought  
The appraiser's value, not the soul:  
The hall-mark was the thing he bought,  
The date on the Chaldean scroll.

What breathed for him the book of hours?  
The triptych, with its heaven of gold?  
Fra' Lippo's cherubs crowned with flowers,  
Mary, with angels manifold?

What did black-lettered Chaucer say?  
What Dante's fiery verse to him?  
Nothing! The critic's value lay  
In type, edition, uncut rim.

Of common things, though passing fair,  
The worth his instinct could not measure;  
He bought a print because 'twas rare,  
And not because it gave him pleasure.

Give me the untaught joy that springs  
In some poor breast that truly feels  
The wonder in a beetle's wings,  
The secret each young leaf reveals.

The message in the work he sees  
Of Nature, or of Art,—all one,  
Raphael, or Praxiteles,—  
The starlight, or the setting sun.

Colour, with all the moons that rise,  
Power, with all the winds that blow,  
His heart remembers, through his eyes,  
The strength of Michael Angelo.

To feel—not drilled to learn, or guess,  
Nor led, like sheep, to narrow toils—  
This is the grace that few possess  
Who heap and lock away their spoils.

But he, though poor, who has a store  
Of treasure that his heart selects,  
With his bare walls, I envy more  
Than the mere rich. *He recollects.*

## THE SWING.

### FOR MUSIC.

UP and down in summer weather,  
Like a bird on wing,  
From a witch-elm bough, together  
Through the air we swing.  
Now in blue etherial spaces,  
From the earth we pass,  
Playing now with clouds at races,  
Fringing now the grass.

Hearing all the whispered pleasure  
Of the nested rooks,  
Meeting eyes that guard their treasure  
With indignant looks:  
One swift moment with the swallows,  
Then among the daisies,  
Like the flying thought that follows  
Fancy through her mazes.



Now we see the plough and furrow,  
Now we drink the sky:  
Now, we watch the worms that burrow,  
Now, the larks on high.

But, with aspirations tending  
Heavenward, from our birth,  
Swing we ne'er so high, the ending  
Brings us down to earth!

## VANITY.

MID the gold columns of a Temple, reared  
To Vanity, a slight self-centred maid,  
Viewing Love's havoc round her, stood and said,  
"Of falling palaces I am afraid.

"Keep me from giving of my best away!  
Here, though men kneel around, let me remain,  
High, pure, unyielding, without sorrow's stain:  
Better live thus, than crushed in Passion's fray!"

Her prayer was answered: one by one they fled,  
Lovers of her proud body, till it shrunk,  
The woman's heart had never stirred nor drunk  
Of that deep love that can outlive the dead.

And so, when faint and fainter grew the song,  
That praised her once, and in the unspoken truth  
Of mirrors she beheld her vanished youth,  
She learned too late what she had lost too long.

Here those who sow must reap what they have sown;  
Who does not love and suffer, unblest dies!  
A hireling hand shall close the weary eyes;  
And no soul waits him in the great unknown.

IN MEMORIAM, F. W. H. M.

ROME, JANUARY 7TH, 1901.

HE sought to force the impenetrable door,  
That we call Death, through which the soul, once free,  
Nor passes back, nor speaks to you or me.  
None hears a certain sound from that far shore,  
Yet still he listened, waiting for a breath,  
To prove the spirit does not end with death.

To solve the doubts that baffle all the wise,  
Heedless of scoffs, he laboured to the close,  
And, like a bird that lives among the snows,  
His soul grew whiter as it neared the skies.  
To most of us the door remains fast locked;  
To him, I think, 'twas opened: for he knocked.

All he loved best he left without a sigh:  
Proclaiming, joyous, as he passed away,  
That they were only parted for a day,  
This but the preface of the life on high.  
How clear the dawn, when the night's rain hath ceased!  
It was the triumph of a soul released.

1901.

## HEARTACHE.

YOU came, old Heartache, in the early summer,  
And found with me your cage, like some strange bird,  
Snared suddenly. Half joy was that new comer,  
Half anguish, by the world unguessed, unheard.

Half joy, for had he flown, 'twould have been robbing  
Me of my love. Sole confidant was he,  
When every pulse with passionate blood was throbbing,  
I would not, if I could, have set him free.

We dwelt together in the land of longing,  
Till with cold winter he spread wide his wings.  
Long since, Youth's passing-bell had done ding-dong-  
ing,  
'Twas time he drank at other fever'd springs:

But left one feather from those wings behind him,  
One that I cherish, though my blood runs chill;  
Look for that bird, Young Heart, for if you find him,  
Something is yours, that sorrow cannot kill.

1900.

## HUMAN LOVE.

WHEN Light and Dark were first divided,  
Before Man's refuge here was built,  
When the great waters had subsided,  
And left the swamp we now call Guilt:

When Man and Woman stood together,  
To face the heat, the storm, the wind,  
And share one fate, whate'er the weather,  
Since Eden's gate was barred behind:

Outcasts, they had, by their transgression,  
Won something here, unknown above:  
And who would lose, having known possession,  
Of passionate, clinging human love?

The love that fires, ennobles, strengthens  
Our hearts as long as we draw breath,  
The love that, as life's journey lengthens,  
Purifies all, and outlives death.

When, from that journey worn and jaded,  
The pilgrim rests, all dangers past,  
This is the prize, if not degraded,  
He lifts from earth to Heaven at last.

## BROUSSA AND OLYMPUS.<sup>1</sup>

AT the foot of Mount Olympus, where Gods loved and  
laughed on high,  
Men have built, amid their troubles,  
Domes that rise like marble bubbles,  
And minarets, like fountains, flashing upward to the  
sky.

Where the sycamore and plantain spread their shadow  
o'er the pools,  
Where the gold and silver glisten,  
On their knees, a circle listen  
To the lessons of the Koran, and the learning of the  
Schools.

Mahmoud reigns, where Jove once thundered,—reigns  
in Allah's name, he says.  
But is woman's lot then bettered?  
Is she not debased and fettered,  
With intellect more narrowed than it was in Pagan  
days?

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to say that this is not really the Olympus of Mythology, which was held to be on the borders of Thessaly and Macedonia. But inasmuch as the name was applied to a number of mountains both in Greece and Asia Minor, perhaps it is a permissible license to associate any range so called with a kingdom which was not of this world.

When Minerva and Diana were besought with choric  
song,  
Women were not blinded cattle;  
They knew: they fought the battle  
That every human being should fight, 'twixt right and  
wrong.

Were the Deities men worshipped more criminal than  
he,  
Who ordained that half God's creatures,  
When abroad, with darkened features,  
Or through barred and shuttered windows, the other  
half should see?

Did great Jove forbid the Empress, the courtezan, the  
slave,  
To bring their sins of living,  
Their sorrow, their thanksgiving,  
Openly to his temples, from the cradle to the grave?

To enter mosques, uncloistered, for a woman here is sin.  
The Sultanas in their satins  
Can only hear the Matins,  
Sitting in gilded coach without, while the Sultan prays  
within.<sup>1</sup>

Prayer is not for woman—slaves of cruelty and lust!  
Could Mary's pure ideal  
Ever have risen, real,  
Had the fishermen of Galilee had wives they could not  
trust?

<sup>1</sup> This I witnessed myself at Constantinople.

As the fathers are, the sons are, fanatics to their laws,  
And Allah's name is branded  
By butchers, bloody-handed,  
From massacres as treacherous as ever stained a Cause.

Old as the hills is infamy: but accursèd be the shams,  
Calling "of God" things evil,  
That come straight from the Devil,  
And "righteous" the deeds that every soul of honour  
damns.

How the Gods in high Olympus must laugh to see that  
men,  
With newer Faiths, abandon  
The rock that true men stand on,  
Without which all religions are as vapours in a fen!

But the rock will rise triumphant, when the mists are  
swept away.  
Whatever Faith men nourish,  
The truth alone can flourish.  
"By your deeds ye shall know them,"—at the last  
Judgment day.



## THE RIVER'S PROGRESS.

A RIVER, struck dumb in its battle  
With ice: peasants crossing in sledges:  
Thus I saw her first: poor frozen cattle  
On her banks, nibbling vainly for sedges.

Next, a hundred miles further, behold her,  
Down walls of sheer rock, like an arrow glance,  
To valleys and fields that enfold her—  
A Queen, dashing on in her arrogance!

She encountered young streams in her progress,  
Who struggled for life as she followed them,  
But were caught and sucked up by the ogress,  
With a froth on her lips as she swallowed them.

All praised her, till Spring came and tore at  
Her mud banks, when miller and cotter  
—The melted snow pouring down—swore at  
The torrent, and hills that begot her.

But, as heedless of men and their wishes  
On her banks as the dead who lay under her,  
She flowed to the sea with her fishes,  
Helping no human effort to plunder her.

Washing down the black feet of the city,  
Under bridges, past churches and towers,  
She seized from the sewers, in pity,  
Their filth, with dead fruitage and flowers.

On, on, past big ships that are lading,  
And the hulks that can voyage no longer,  
Past forts built to combat invading,  
On, on, to meet one who is stronger.

To marry, embrace, and commingle,  
With loud laughter of joyous emotion,—  
Then the river, so turbulent single,  
Falls asleep in the arms of the ocean!

## THE GATE OF JUDGMENT.

A PROPHET stands within the Gate,  
The World goes out and in.  
He smiles on them of good estate,  
And curses them that sin.

The Lord will stand within the Gate,  
When, at the last dread call,  
We pass without, to learn our fate  
From Him, who knoweth all.

—Each snare of blood, each fatal gift,—  
To Him our sins appear  
Not as to men. And he will lift  
Some of the fallen here.

1903.

## UP AND DOWN HILL.

TAKE courage, Heart, although the trees that shaded  
Thy upland path be blasted, or cut down,  
Though "Traveller's Joy," or Summer's rose be faded,  
And all the fields are brown.

When darkness gathered o'er the landscape dreary,  
Thee, bent with griefs, thy staff supported still;  
It will not break: lean on it well, when weary,  
Upon thy way down hill.

There, in a green bed by the silent river,  
Thy rest awaits thee in the vale below;  
There shalt thou lay thy burdens down for ever,  
There, where the daisies blow.

## MY LOST KINGDOM.

WHEN I was young, my heart was clad  
In the purple of a king:  
And on my head a crown I had,  
And on my hand a ring.

In visionary lands I reigned,  
My subjects were my thoughts,  
But rebels: while my soul remained  
Supine, in royal courts.

Supine, with dreams by flattery fed,  
Till the hours for work were done,  
And I knew, when the sun went down in its bed,  
How little my soul had won.

What that I dreamed had come to pass?  
The purple had turned to gray;  
The golden crown now seemed of brass,  
The ring had dropped away.

I had never used my sword aright,  
To smite my foes to the dust:  
And our weapons, if we do not fight,  
Are eaten away by rust.

But the rebels, too, when the red sun died,  
Waxed weak. Was it conquest then,  
That, with battered crown, I stood beside  
The ranks of those fallen men?

Poor conquest, at best! When the blood runs slow,  
I can treat those foes with scorn,  
And can trample down, when the sun is low,  
The forces that won at morn.

1901.

## FLOATING.

To live, my dear, like you serene, persuaded  
Of the omnipotence of trivial things,  
To put aside the thought that has upbraided,  
Never of Conscience to endure the stings,—

Is this true wisdom? When the day is dying,  
And from the dwindling water doubts arise,  
That slept at noon, now on the surface lying,  
And from our souls we cannot keep our eyes;—

Will you not wonder, as you near the ocean,  
Where all must wake from life's deceptive dream  
Why you have floated, without strenuous motion,  
Idly, a thing inert, upon the stream?

1900.

## A SOUTHERN GARDEN.

I MIND me one day, years ago, I was walking  
    'Neath a hot southern sun, on a sandy roadside,  
When I and the loved one with whom I was talking,  
    Turned into a garden whose wicket stood wide.  
We had left the highroad, which the feet of men  
    harden,  
    And the world's iron wheels even more than men's  
    feet,  
Here the blue sea washed up at the wall of the garden;  
    I said "Let us shelter awhile from the heat."

The garden seemed hushed, 'neath the uplifted finger  
    Of a cypress, that frowned on each song of a bird,  
Till it flew far away, and we sat down to linger  
    In that haven of rest, where no voices were heard.  
On the face of my loved one the toil-stain had vanished,  
    From the burthen and heat she had here found  
    repose,  
For one little hour here the dark thought was banished,  
    That life has no rest, only rest at its close.



The twilight descended in silence, just broken  
By the rhythm of waves, like the rhymes of an ode,  
And a peace fell upon us, without a word spoken,  
As we sought once again, hand in hand, the high-  
road.  
And often since then, when the road seems to harden,  
And footsore, and weary of heart, I repine,  
I enter the gate of that sweet southern garden,  
And sit down and rest 'neath its trellis of vine.

WRITTEN FOR A PERFORMANCE IN AID  
OF "THE WAIFS AND STRAYS."

FEW are not "Strays" upon the great Highroad,  
And many "Waifs." Hold hands with one another.  
He is not poorest who hath no abode,  
Nor richest he who will not help his brother.  
Like withered leaves, when we upon the wind  
Are blown from life, what joy at close of day,  
If, with a contrite heart we look behind,  
We hear the blessing of the Waif or Stray!

1903.

## A CONTRAST.

Two men were marching to their death  
    (The narrow road was muddy;)  
One was half blind, and scant of breath:  
    One, open-eyed, and ruddy.

One, strong in love and crime, bereft  
    A fond heart of its glory:  
One, weak in all things, only left  
    Scorn's echo for its story.

Which man, who trod that muddy road,  
    Grieved most at its beginning?  
He for whose sin no tears had flowed,  
    Or he who loved while sinning?

## TWO WORSHIPPERS.

IN Parma's Duomo I beheld at dawn  
A picture of the Christ upon his Cross,  
And a poor peasant, standing face to face;  
Her face a little lower than her Lord's,  
To which, 'neath a black shawl, the sorrowing eyes  
Were raised. Then suddenly, she pressed  
Her mouth against the wounded body twice,  
As mothers passionately kiss their babes,  
And went her way. I, drawing nearer, saw  
That the fresh wounds upon the Christ were those  
Made by the lips of fervent ignorance,  
Wearing the painted canvas into shreds,—  
And wondered. . . .

Is this, then, Idolatry?  
If every dogma should be argued down,  
Centuries hence, will men find nothing here  
To feed the hungry heart, sustain the weak,  
And comfort the bereaved, as now they find  
Who look to God, albeit thro' painted glass  
Of superstition? . . .

I recalled the verse  
Of a much vaunted poet,<sup>1</sup> worshipper  
Of flesh, in Italy, shrieking aloud,

<sup>1</sup> Stecchetti.

“ Blessed be Guttenberg, who vanquished Christ,  
Wood of the Printing Press! that overthrew  
Wood of the Cross, and freed men’s tortured souls  
From all the bonds of Priestcraft!”

Is it so? . . .

The highest knowlêdge is to learn how small  
Our knowledge is: not to tear down the dome  
Of Faith that shields so many: nor to spurn  
Those who have lost that shelter; nor cry out  
That we alone have found the truth, but wait  
Till the Great Wings have swept our mists away,  
And the true Dawn breaks on the sleeping world.

## HUBERT.

YOU ask, old friend, why Hubert never married?

You shall see darkly through the glass. He strode  
In youth to market, 'neath the weight he carried,  
With other eager Hopefuls on the road.

And his eyes lighted, in the town he entered,  
On a high window, where there shone, in-framed,  
A young Madonna, whose grave eyes were centred  
On the young passer, ignorant, unnamed.

There were no angels round to tend and serve her,  
She dropped a green leaf from her throne on high.  
He picked it up, with momentary fervour,  
And pressed it to his lips, and then—passed by.

But life's revenges came in after hours.  
He looked at woman once with strong desire.  
Under her feet he flung the fairest flowers,  
Upon her altar laid his manhood's fire.

Under her sweet breath all the incense froze.  
His fire could never kindle it. A sigh  
Broke, as her foot trod lightly on a rose,—  
Her gracious eyes looked down, and she passed by!

## THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER.

IN early boyhood, when my mother taught me,  
A little child, who stood beside her knee,  
And from the world above a message brought me,  
Of what has been, and is, and is to be,

That voice, with all its tender, fine inflection,  
Telling the story of the Christ she knew,—  
I hear it still, in moments of dejection,  
Still feel the spirit of those words is true,

And see more clear the Form that pious sages  
Obscured by dogma; like a sculptured stone,  
From which we wipe the gathered dust of ages,  
And, tearing lichens that have round it grown,

Wash off the paint, wherewith tradition daubed it.  
. . . If that white image thy contentment fills,  
And thou hast felt its spirit and absorbed it,  
Let go the rest. It is the letter kills.

## DE MORTUIS. . . .

LESS to himself than others was he friend:

A boy at heart, consumed by secret fires,  
He lived his life unto the very end,  
In eager quest of unassuaged desires.

God gave him genius and a generous soul:

But held back what the first ambition craves,  
The force a wandering fancy to control,  
And make of passions not our kings, but slaves.

Yet is his memory green. Howe'er he erred,

In hearts that loved him is he unforget.  
If the fair vellum by ink-stains be blurred,  
They love the writing, and condone the blot.



## THE FUTURE'S PATTERNS.

LET her spin on. The night will soon be winning  
Her loom to darkness; and young eyes will fail.  
Like Fate, she knows not now what she is spinning,  
Whether maid's shroud, or happy bridal veil.

Let her spin on. The pattern she is weaving  
She will not see until to-morrow's noon;  
Roses of love, or nightshade of heart's grieving,—  
Life's threads might snap, if she beheld too soon.

## OLD AGE.

THERE comes a time when nothing more can hurt us,  
The winds have done their worst to strew the shore  
With stranded hulks: no power can convert us  
Into the buoyant barks of youth once more.

But we can sit and patch the sails for others,  
And weave the nets for younger hands to trawl,  
And spin long yarns to listening boys and mothers,  
While sea and winds to one another call:

And point to perils, when our bark lay tossing  
In that dread passage which we here call Life,  
And betwixt shoals and rocks we steered our crossing,  
Unto the shore, where we have done with strife.

From seas tumultuous the sands have barred it:  
From there we watch the white sails fleeting by.  
Old Age is never drear, if we regard it  
As the safe harbour where the old boats lie.

## PLEASANTRIES



ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM  
LADY —.

LONG-awaited-for letter !  
Am I any better,  
As I sit here its substance demanding?  
Its fair face, My Lady,  
Like Sir Richard Kalmady,  
Wants something—in fact—*understanding*!

So even, so neat,  
Yet so formed to defeat  
Curiosity, hungry from absence,  
Each word, when I ask  
What it means, 'neath its mask,  
Seems to stand with a dagger to stab sense!

Who pretends that the soul  
Can be read as a whole,  
In such characters, shrouded in mystery!  
Why! You're just the reverse  
Of this puzzle, that's worse  
Than the Sphinx's famed riddles in history!

The A's take no food  
Open-mouthed, as they should,

The L's lift up masts, but are sail-less,  
The E's are mere blots,  
And the I's without dots,  
While as to the G's, they are tail-less.

Without form and void,  
M's and N's are employed  
All the rest to confuse or to smother,  
And the P's and the Q's  
Politely refuse  
To be recognized one from the other!

Neither comma'd, nor stopped,  
With all articles dropped  
In the waves of this pen-and-ink ocean,  
Of a Sanscrit epistle,  
Or early Greek missal,  
'Twere easier to gather a notion.

In the gossip you mention  
About someone's pension,  
And marriages on the horizon,  
I lose each cognomen,  
And match all the women  
To men whom they never clapped eyes on!

In a splutter of ink  
Your delightful words sink,  
Oh! what I would give to recall them!  
But, baffled and vext,  
From the wreck of the text,  
It is hopeless to try to uphaul them.

Witty censure, or praise,  
The fine point in each phrase,  
Your tongue knows so well how to dress it:  
But as well be a fib  
As the truth, when the nib  
Of your pen is too blunt to express it.

Were your secrets quadruple,  
I'd leave without scruple,  
Your letters about, as a stiptich  
To those of Eve's mind,  
Who each passage would find  
Than Bacon in Shakespeare more cryptic.

But be calm: its fair face  
Is locked up in a case,  
Till I open, and beg you to quote it:  
When I know you will say,  
"I can't read it *to-day* . . .  
But I knew what it meant when I wrote it!"

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VISITOR'S BOOK  
AT EDEN HALL.

IT is told us that in the beginning,  
A garden of Eden stood fair,  
Where a serpent instructed in sinning  
A happy and innocent pair.

In this Eden a tree of good showers,  
Alone, its rich fruit o'er the land,  
And an angel presides o'er its flowers,  
With no flaming sword in her hand.

She has welcomed us all with her glances,  
No serpent lurks here in the grass:  
And we mourn, as the moment advances  
When we must from Paradise pass!



## I WOULD IF I WERE YOU.

### SONG.

WHY do you read those stupid books,  
When all the world is blythe to-day?  
The birds are babbling to the brooks,  
The squirrels in the woods at play.  
It rained last night,—but what of that?  
Your shoes are strong: the sky is blue.  
You cannot spoil your garden hat—  
Come out! . . . I would if I were you.

Why learn strange tongues, when Nature spells  
One, without grammar, to mankind?  
Who listens, hears the tales she tells  
Borne from the stars on every wind!  
Why practise fugues, when nature sings  
Better than Man? Her voice breaks through  
The silence of all growing things,—  
Come out! . . . I would if I were you.

Of beauty have you lost all sense?  
Grown crabbed, who are young and strong?  
I would not slave at pounds and pence,  
And worry if my sum came wrong!

Shut up your books, and—in God's praise,  
Read Nature's, old, yet ever new—  
Better than even Shakespeare's plays,—  
Come out! I would if I were you.

“PARTURIUNT MONTES.”—

THE mountains are groaning in labour,  
And call on the sea to deliver them;  
Each crieth aloud to his neighbour,—  
All shout to the thunder to shiver them.

Lo! The answer comes. Valleys are riven  
Around, and convulsed in a spasm,  
Sweeping down giant trees, that have striven  
For ages with storms, in the chasm.

The mighty rocks, cleft, like a fountain  
Crash down to the valley and surge there . . .  
But the mice, from their holes in the mountain,  
Are the only live things that emerge there!

1903.

## TO A MUSICIAN.

WHEN you sit down, my friend, to a "Steinway,"  
I am lifted in spirit, and cross  
Broad rivers, and vales, up a pine-way,  
Where I lie down and dream in the moss.

The Jagers are dancing a czardas,—  
Then a wail from the mountain is heard,  
And the listener's heart must be hard as  
A rock, if no pulses are stirred.

I love that old song of the people!  
Through your fingers I see once again  
Smoky huts in a wood, and a steeple  
That pierces the mist in the plain.

"Verlassen" 's the song that brings "Mater,"  
And his dear mountain-home, he declares,  
To the heart of an alien waiter,  
Or a listening maid on the stairs.

Your feeling, my friend's in your fingers,  
We are instruments all, to be played on:  
'Tis a way with you pianists and singers,  
Whose hands heed not what they are laid on. . . .

The wood and the ivory matter  
But little: the passions that burn  
Through the voice or the fingers, and scatter  
Their spell is *your* only concern.

To the end, you will snare by your artful  
Persuasions of sound all you can—  
I have ne'er met a player so heart-full,  
And rarely so heartless a man!

1903.

## L'ENVOI.

### OBLIVION.

GRIEVE not that I shall nothing leave behind  
That will live on when I have done with living;  
If in one heart some thought be underlined,  
Some fault forgotten, that is past forgiving,

It is enough. Should these poor pages go  
To line a trunk, what matter? Not in vain  
They lived their hour, if, when some fire burns low,  
They feed with hope the embers that remain.

1903.













